42. Economic Depression.

MR. KURUVILA JOHN (*Karunagapalli taluk, Group II*) speaking in Malayalam referred to the fall in the price of the agricultural products and the consequent economic depression in the State. He welcomed the proposal of the Government to appoint a committee to investigate and report about the causes of the present trade depression. The member referred in particular to the poverty of the people and their financial strain, with reference to Karunagapalli taluk, represented by him and suggested the following remedial measures :—

1. Proportionate reduction of land tax, till the prices of the agricultural products improve.

2. Reduction of customs duties on articles of exports, proportionate to the reduction in the price of such articles.

3. Remission of licence fees for fishing boats.

4. Suspension of all *chitties* for amounts above Rs. 100.

5. Immediate appointment of Trade Agents in foreign markets.

6. Bringing into force the Village Panchayat Regulation.

7. Increasing the allotment for agricultural loans and formulating a new scheme under which the poor agriculturists could get the benefit of the loans.

8. Introduction of a uniform rate of motor hire throughout the State.

9. Encouragement of cottage industries such as coir-making, mat-making, etc., by rendering financial help through co-operative societies and banks.

10. Encouragement of the temperance movement.

11. Reduction of the pay of Government servants getting above Rs. 50 per mensem.

12. Suspension of public works which were not urgent.

43. Economic Depression.

MR. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI VELAPPAN NAIR (*Vaikam taluk*) speaking in Malayalam dwelt upon the great economic depression prevailing in the country. There was an unprecedented fall in the prices of indigenous products and very great scarcity of money in the land. The fall in the price of articles was not due to overproduction but mainly on account of want of facilities for the development of industries. The attention of the Industries Department should be devoted to the question of utilising the raw products of the country for the manufacture of articles required for local consumption. The industries connected with copra, coir, rubber and tapioca, so largely produced in the country, should be developed. No useful purpose was at present served by the Industries Department. The one department which could achieve a great deal towards solving the growing unemployment problem in the State was the Industries Department. The weaving branch of

the department was one capable of serving some useful purpose. But it was not worked properly. The itinerant parties were not at present working for more than six months in one place. This was a great disadvantage and tended to defeat the usefulness of the institution. An amount was allotted every year for industrial loans. The whole amount should be made available for the purpose.

The development of agriculture also played an equally important part in the economic prosperity of a country. The main source of income of the people of the country was agriculture. Rice was the staple food of the people. But the output of paddy was not sufficient for local consumption. Paddy cultivation should be improved by educating the people in improved and scientific methods of cultivation. The Agricultural Department was not at present a major department of the State. The powers of the Director should be enhanced, if necessary, and the number of his assistants should be increased, and improved methods of agriculture should be popularised in all the various parts of the country. Perhaps it might be pleaded that there were experimental farms to enable the agriculturists to get themselves acquainted with the modern methods of agriculture. There was an agricultural farm at Vaikam. But it served no useful purpose, as it was inaccessible to the agriculturists. A pathway should be immediately opened to the farm. Another method of increasing the output of paddy was by insisting, at the time *puduval* lands and backwaters were registered, that all lands fit for paddy cultivation should be utilised for that purpose. Further registries should be effected only in small blocks. Lands should not be assigned away to foreigners.

The economic development of a country depended also on its commercial prosperity. Hence Trade Agents should be appointed in all important commercial centres. The Government should also correspond direct with the big firms of America, Europe, Japan and Australia and find out markets for the local products.

Another department which could relieve to some extent the present situation was the Co-operative Department. But the department was under-staffed. There were only 27 Inspectors to inspect 1,806 societies. After auditing work, the Inspectors got only 4 months for inspection and other work. In British India, only 40 societies were placed under the control of one Inspector. Besides, there were separate Inspectors for attending to liquidation, propaganda, non-credit and audit. There were 1,377 agricultural societies. But most of them were engaged only in credit business. Only 27 societies were engaged in distributive work. More societies should be registered for this purpose or at least the existing societies should be induced to take up this work also.

44. The present poverty problem and its solution.

MR. KANAKKU MATHEVAN PILLAI NARAYANA PILLAI (*Kartikapalli taluk*) speaking in Malayalam referred to the deplorable condition of the people of the Kartikapalli taluk, who were mainly